

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS

COMPLETE STATEMENT

OF

BRIGADIER GENERAL BRUCE A. BERWICK  
COMMANDER  
GREAT LAKES & OHIO RIVER DIVISION  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BEFORE

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

ON

THE GREAT LAKES REGIONAL COLLABORATION STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 13, 2006

COMPLETE STATEMENT  
OF  
BRIGADIER GENERAL BRUCE A. BERWICK  
COMMANDER  
GREAT LAKES & OHIO RIVER DIVISION  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
BEFORE THE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT  
ON  
THE GREAT LAKES REGIONAL COLLABORATION STRATEGY

---

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, Committee members, and distinguished guests, I am pleased to testify before you on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) activities that contribute to the protection and restoration of the ecosystem of the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes ecosystem is a nationally significant natural resource. It is the world's largest freshwater ecosystem, and also provides millions of U.S. and Canadian residents with water for consumption, transportation, power, recreation, and a number of other uses. The Corps is working together with other Federal agencies, the Canadians, and the affected States, Tribes, local governments stakeholder groups, to help protect and restore this ecosystem.

The Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), Mr. John Paul Woodley, Jr., is the Department of Army's representative on the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force established under Executive Order 13340, which the President issued in May 2004. Corps staff participated in several of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration teams and co-chaired the Sustainable Development Strategy Team. The Corps also provided some funding for contractor support.

My comments will focus on several specific projects that the Corps is implementing in cooperation with non-Federal partners that will benefit the ecosystem of the Great Lakes and provide some perspective on the challenges facing the effort to protect and restore the ecosystem of the Great Lakes.

## Regional Collaboration

The Strategy to Restore the Great Lakes, which was produced by the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, addresses eight of the nine priority issues identified by the governors of the Great Lakes States. These eight issue areas cover a wide range of environmental concerns, including invasive species, contaminated sediments, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, and aging wastewater infrastructure.

The Strategy suggests a variety of ways to improve the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes. Most of the recommendations in the Strategy are relatively broad and programmatic in nature. The Strategy also does not integrate its recommendations across the eight issue areas.

The Corps' approach to water resources involves the consideration of alternatives, evaluation of costs, impacts and benefits, and direct participation by all levels of government, industry, and stakeholders. This participation fosters an open dialogue to integrate sometimes competing or conflicting water resource needs.

Collaborative, system-wide planning can contribute to the protection and restoration of the ecosystem and a sustainable balance of water resource uses. In the Great Lakes, as elsewhere, the Corps is working to find ways to protect and restore the ecosystem while still meeting water supply, navigation, commerce, recreation, and other uses.

## Corps Activities that Benefit the Great Lakes Ecosystem

The Corps of Engineers has a variety of programs and projects in the Great Lakes that provide for both economic development and aquatic ecosystem restoration. I will provide a brief summary of a few of these projects and programs.

The Corps of Engineers is operating the electrical barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal with the goal of preventing, if possible, the migration of the Asian carp and other invasive fish species between the watershed of the Mississippi River (via the Illinois Waterway) and the Great Lakes ecosystem. We are continuing to operate the demonstration barrier, which was constructed in 2002, and are constructing a permanent barrier. This project has been challenging for technical reasons, but we recognize its importance to the ecosystem of the Great Lakes and are doing our best to keep this line of defense in place.

In addition, the Corps is working in partnership with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to design and build traps and barriers to control the spread of the sea lamprey, an invasive species that is already in the Great Lakes. The sea lamprey is an eel-like fish that parasitizes larger game fish. So far, we have completed two traps and one barrier and have several more such efforts being readied for construction through Section 1135, a program authorized for small projects under our aquatic ecosystem restoration mission.

One of the Corps' regional programs, specific to the Great Lakes, is called the Great Lakes Tributary Model. Through this program, we are developing computer models of

Great Lakes tributaries so that State and local land management agencies are better able to evaluate, prioritize and design options for soil conservation and nonpoint pollution prevention. This program has developed models for 20 tributaries so far. One example is the model developed for the Nemadji River, which flows through northern Minnesota and Wisconsin into Duluth-Superior Harbor. This model helped county and state agencies evaluate the effects of forestry practices in order to reduce soil and streambank erosion. The long-term benefits of this Great Lakes program will be less soil erosion, less nonpoint pollution washing into rivers, and less dredging and contamination in our navigation channels downstream.

The Administration's Budget for FY 2007 includes funding for several Corps efforts that will benefit the ecosystem of the Great Lakes. The McCook Reservoir project is part of a larger effort to virtually eliminate the backflows of raw sewage into Lake Michigan at Chicago. The Confined Disposal Facility in East Chicago, Indiana will allow dredging in support of navigation at Indiana Harbor, the fourth busiest port on the Great Lakes, and will also remove and confine several million cubic yards of contaminated sediments from this Great Lakes Area of Concern.

Over the past forty years, the Corps of Engineers has removed and safely confined more than 90 million cubic yards of contaminated sediments from Great Lakes harbors and channels as part of our commercial navigation mission. Our experience with dredging has been used to support the remediation of contaminated sediments in the Great Lakes through other programs, including the EPA's Legacy Act program.

This past June, I joined EPA Administrator Steve Johnson in a celebration of the ongoing Legacy Act sediment remediation project in Ashtabula, Ohio. The Corps' participation in this effort included planning and design of the sediment cleanup through the Corps' Great Lakes Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and Environmental Dredging authorities. The Corps is also preparing designs for the proposed one-time expanded dredging along the authorized Federal navigation channel to complement the Legacy Act cleanup.

Another activity that we are just starting focuses specifically on wetlands and aquatic habitat. Earlier this year, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) John Paul Woodley, Jr., announced the selection of the Great Lakes Habitat Initiative project for \$1 million of FY 2006 funding.

This two-year Great Lakes Habitat Initiative is an example of the type of integrated planning that can help bridge the gap between general recommendations for the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and site-specific actions. This initiative will identify on-the-ground projects for habitat protection and restoration, develop performance metrics for prioritization, create comparable cost and benefit data, and link projects with existing Federal, State, Tribal, local, and non-governmental funding sources.

## Conclusion

The Corps is pleased to have had the opportunity to appear before you to provide an overview of our activities of importance to the ecosystem of the Great Lakes. We value highly the water resources of the Great Lakes, the partnerships we have formed with our sister Federal agencies, the Canadians, the Great Lakes States, Tribes, local governments and stakeholder groups in managing and protecting this unique resource.

The Corps looks forward to continuing these partnerships. Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions.